CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of selectively compressing data packets comprising:

bypassing a compression process responsive to detecting a first marker in the data packets; and

resuming the compression process responsive to detecting a second marker in the data packets.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the first marker indicates that data subsequent to the first marker is compressed.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the second marker indicates that data previous to the second marker is compressed.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the first marker is a predetermined string of data.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the first marker is a predetermined text string of data.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the compression process compresses the data packets prior to sending the data packets over a network.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising:

encrypting the data packets prior to sending the data packets over the network.

8. The method of claim 6 further comprising:

resuming the compression process after a timeout occurs.

9. A method of processing data packets comprising:

searching a first data packet for a first marker that indicates that subsequent data is already compressed;

forwarding the first data packet without trying to re-compress it, if the first marker was found; and

compressing and forwarding the first data packet, if the first marker was not found.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein searching the first data packet for the first marker is performed by looking for a predetermined text string in the first data packet.

11. The method of claim 9 further comprising:

forwarding one or more subsequent data packets without trying to re-compress them, if the first marker was found; and

compressing and forwarding the one or more subsequent data packets, if the first marker was not found.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

searching for a second marker that indicates that data following the second marker is not compressed; and

compressing and forwarding a second set of one or more subsequent data packets after finding the second marker, wherein each of the second set of one or more subsequent data packets are searched for the first marker.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein searching for the second marker is performed by looking for a second predetermined text string.

14. A method of selectively compressing data packets comprising:

searching a data packet for a first string of data;

bypassing a compression process responsive to detecting the first string of data;

searching for a second string of data; and

resuming the compression process responsive to detecting the second string of data.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein a string search engine is used to search the data packet for the first string of data.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein a string search engine of a network processor is used to search the data packet for the first string of data.

17. The method of claim 14 further comprising:

searching a subsequent data packet for a third string of data;

bypassing the compression process responsive to detecting the third string of data;

searching for a fourth string of data; and

resuming the compression process responsive to detecting the fourth string of data.

18. The method of claim 14 further comprising:

resuming the compression process responsive to a timeout event.

19. The method of claim 14 further comprising:

testing whether a current data packet is compressed responsive to a timeout event.

20. An article comprising a computer-accessible medium which stores computer-executable instructions, the instructions causing a computer to:

search a data packet for a first string of data;

bypass a compression process responsive to detecting the first string of data;

search for a second string of data; and

resume the compression process responsive to detecting the second string of data.

21. The article of claim 20, the article further comprises instructions to:

search a subsequent data packet for a third string of data;

bypass the compression process responsive to detecting the third string of data;

search for a fourth string of data; and

resume the compression process responsive to detecting the fourth string of data.

22. The article of claim 20, wherein the compression process compresses data packets prior to the data packets being forwarded across a network.

23. The article of claim 22, wherein the data packets are encrypted before being forwarded across the network.